

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /057 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1531

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ZA, US, OVIP (KAUNDA, KENNETH)

PASS COMMERCE

PASS USIA FOR IBS/PA AND IPS

REFERENCE: LUSAKA 721 AND 730

1. PRIME MINISTER CHONA TELEPHONED ME THIS EVENING TO ASK OUR HELP IN SCOTCHING US PRESS REPORTING OF TIMES OF ZAMBIA STORY TODAY APRIL 22 THAT GRZ HAS REFUSED TO MEET AMERICAN RAILWAY EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION NOW IN ZAMBIA IN RETALIATION T ES "FUUB" OF PRESIDENT KAUNDA. CHONA EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR LETTER I HAD SENT TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER SILUNGWE OUTLINING US PROTOCOL ON PRIVATE VISITS BY CHIEFS OF STATE AND, WITH REFERENCE TO TIMES APRIL 21 EDITORIAL AND APRIL 22 STORY, EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT MISUNDERSTANDING NOT BE ALLOWED TO DETRACT FROM WHAT WAS CLEARLY MOMENTOUS AND IMPORTANT VISIT TO US BY PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA. PM SAID GRZ UNDERSTOOD CUSTOMARY US PRACTICE, WITH WHICH HE SAID HE FAMILIAR FROM HIS TIME AS BIBASSADOR TO THE US. KAUNDA VISIT, AS SILUNGWE HAD SAID ON EVENING NEWS, HAD BEEN SUCCESS. PM AND SILUNGWE HAD CONFERRED THIS EVENING AND THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF DISSEMINATION OF TIMES STORY IN US ON AMERICAN PEOPLE. HE SAID AMBASSADOR MWALE HAD BEEN ATTEMPTING TO TELEPHONE HIM TO DISCUSS MATTER.

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2. CHONA ASKED THAT STEPS BE TAKEN TO INFORM US MEDIA ASAP THAT TRADE MISSION IS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED WITH FULL GRZ APPROVAL AND COOPERATION. HE DID NOT, OF COURSE, WANT HIS OWN NAME OR THAT OF OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BROUGHT INTO IT. PM DID NOT WISH TO GET INTO DIRECT PUBLIC CONFRONTATION WITH TIMES.

3. I SAID WE WOULD CERTAINLY INFORM DEPT OF PM'S CONCERN THAT RECORD BE SET STRAIGHT FOR AMERICAN MEDIA ASAP. I SUGGESTED BEST OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE DEPT'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING TOMORROW, APRIL 23. PM VERY MUCH HOPED ACTION COULD BE TAKEN SOONER TO CATCH MORNING PAPERS.

4. WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE DEPT SETTING RECORD STRAIGHT, IF POSSIBLE EVEN BEFORE NOON BRIEFING, THROUGH STATEMENT TO EFFECT IT DEPT'S UNDERSTANDING WORK OF US RAILWAY EQUIPMENT TRADE MISSION PROCEEDING EFFECTIVELY AND ON SCHEDULE WITH COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF GRZ; TODAY THE TRADE MISSION HELD DISCUSSIONS IN KABWE WITH OFFICIALS OF ZAMBIA RAILWAYS, INCLUDING GENERAL MANAGER HARRY FAST AND GENERAL MANAGER DESIGNATE HOSEA SOKO, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE US; TOMORROW, APRIL 23, MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED WITH THE NATIONAL TRANSPORT CORPORATION AND OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER, TRANSPORT AND WORKS; WEDNESDAY APRIL 24 THE MISSION DEPARTS FOR GABORONE, BOTSWANA, THE LAST STOP ON THE MISSION'S FOUR-NATION AFRICAN TOUR, WHICH ALSO INCLUDED NIGERIA AND ZAIRE.

5. RECOMMEND ALSO THAT VOA CARRY FOREGOING IN PARA 4 ON ITS AFRICA SERVICE AS WELL. FULL DETAILS ON MISSION AVAILABLE FROM COMMERCE DEPT, BIC/OIM/AFRICA DIVISION, PHONE 967-3865.

6. HERE WE WILL ISSUE PRESS RELEASE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO TIMES STORY DESCRIBING VRADXQRASSION'S WORK AS ABOVE.

7. FOREGOING HAS CONCURRENCE OF MISSION DIRECTOR THEODORE FIEDLER. NELSON.

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